

India Street Neighborhood Study
Charles F. Hussey House
also known as India House
37 India Street
Nantucket
Nantucket County
Massachusetts

HABS No. MASS-1044

HABS
MASS
10-NANT
75E-

PHOTOGRAPHS
WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

Historic American Buildings Survey
Office of Archeology and Historic Preservation
National Park Service
Department of the Interior
Washington, D.C. 20240

INDIA STREET NEIGHBORHOOD STUDY

CHARLES F. HUSSEY HOUSE
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Location: 37 India Street (on north side), Nantucket,
Massachusetts

Present Owner: Stephen J. deBaun

Present Occupant: Stephen J. deBaun

Present Use: Inn known as India House (seasonal).

Brief Statement
of Significance: Example of a typical early nineteenth century
Nantucket house; part of the India Street
Neighborhood Study (MASS-1013).

PART I. HISTORICAL INFORMATION

A. Physical History:

1. Original and subsequent owners:

- 1803 -- Charles F. Hussey bought the land from his
parents, Reuben and Phebe Hussey for \$215.
- 1813 -- Sylvanus Folger Jenkins bought from Charles
F. Hussey for \$6300. "land with my dwelling
house which I (Hussey) built".
- 1830 -- Zenas Coleman bought from the guardians of
Caroline and Silvanus Jenkins, minors, the
children of Sylvanus Jenkins who had died in
1818.
- 1831 -- Nathaniel Tallant bought from Zenus Coleman.
- 1844 -- Philander Folger from Nathaniel Tallant.
- 1852 -- Freeman Parker from Philander Folger.
- 1865 -- Joshua Parker and Edward C. Austin from Freeman
Parker.
- 1865 -- Robert Foster from Joshua Parker and Edward C.
Austin.
- 1923 -- Wilbur D. Steele from Mary F. Valentine et al
who had inherited under the will of Augusta S.
Foster, widow of Robert Foster.

1929 -- Mildred M. Wing and Edna Margaret Prentice from Wilbur D. Steele.
1930 -- Edna Margaret Prentice from Mildred M. Wing.
1946 -- Luther T. Fernald et ux from Margaret Prentice.
1964 -- John Walter and Janet C. Moore from Luther T. and Jessie I. Fernald.
1968 to date -- Stephen J. deBaun from Janet C. Moore.
(Abstract: Records on file at Registry of Deeds, Nantucket, Massachusetts.)

2. Date of erection: About 1804. (Abstract: Book 17, Page 278 and Book 23, Page 17, Registry Deeds, Nantucket, Massachusetts.)
3. Architect: Probably none.
4. Original plans, construction, etc.: The house was built with two stories, a high basement, a gable roof and central chimney.

H. B. Worth in "Early Houses" states, "Near the opening of the 19th century a modification of the lean-to style came into general use on the Island and contained all the advantages of the ancient type and was more convenient. Among these are several on India Street. This style consists of a two story house with center or end chimney and a two story ell in the rear. From 1795 to 1820 most of the houses were of this pattern."

5. Notes on alterations and additions: On the interior of the house at the southeast of the front doorway the buttry and a closet are now one room which may be entered either from the front hall or from the sitting room (originally the kitchen) behind the entry. The original burning room is now a bedroom and new baths have been added for convenience of guests at the inn.

B. Historical Events Connected with the Structure:

This house is located in that area originally described as the Third Squadron of Wesco Acre Lots, at a place commonly known by the name of Micah's Pond. India Street in the early 1800's was largely occupied by the wealthier families, many of whom derived large profit from the East India trade as well as from whaling. According to the Portfolio, written in 1811, it was first called India Row; later it became Pearl Street and still later the name was changed back to India Street. When this house was built, the

street was known as Pearl Street. Westminster Street to the north was formerly called Clay Lane, and Micah's Pond extended from that area to the central part of India Street.

Charles F. Hussey, a ropemaker, married Sarah Jenkins in 1798 and built his home shortly afterwards. In 1813 he sold the property to Sylvanus Folger Jenkins, a successful New York merchant and his wife's brother, for \$6300 which was a big price in those days. The Jenkins family owned several pieces of land on the north side of India Street which they were selling for house lots around 1800.

The property changed hands several times thereafter, until from 1923 to 1929 it was the home of the well-known fiction writer Wilbur Daniel Steele. Among his writings were several books with Nantucket backgrounds.

During Miss Prentice's ownership the house became an inn known as India House, and it continued as such under the Moore and deBaun ownerships.

C. Sources of Information:

1. Old Views: Photograph of Pearl Street in Nantucket Illustrated by A. Wittemann, New York: Albertype Co., 1888.

2. Bibliography:

Worth, Henry Barnard. "Early Houses at Nantucket", Nantucket Historical Association Proceedings, 1904, p. 19 - 24.

Prepared by Mrs. Marie M. Coffin
Nantucket, Massachusetts
January, 1971.

PART II. ARCHITECTURAL INFORMATION

A. General Statement:

1. Architectural character: Typical late eighteenth century Nantucket house, two stories, high basement, rectangular in plan with ell and miscellaneous appendages; gable roof, central chimney, off-center entry.

2. Condition of fabric: Good, modified internally to accommodate commercial guests and dining, owner's residence in appendage.

B. Description of the Exterior:

1. Overall dimensions:
 - a. Original structure: 30'-6" by 52'-8".
 - b. Recent appendages: 22'-2" by 48'-3".
2. Foundations: Red clay brick foundation wall at street, rubble stone elsewhere.
3. Wall construction: Wood frame, weathered 4"-5" exposed cedar shingles, cornerboards and cornice painted white.
4. Structural system: Post and lintel platform system with posts exposed at interior corners and in north wall at service stairway.
5. Stoops and bulkheads: Front stoop at edge of sidewalk on raised masonry platform, brick edging with concrete pavers; wood platform and steps from east side, cylindrical balusters, square newels with caps; east entrance into ell has wood steps, wood lattice arbor with semi-circular hood; exterior wood stairway to second floor spaces in ell; bulkhead at west side of house.
6. Chimneys: Multi-flue chimneys in house and ell, brick construction.
7. Openings:
 - a. Doorways and doors: Street doorway is off-center, four-pane overdoor, classic trim, six-panel wood door, raised feather-edged panels, vertical beaded boards at interior surface.
 - b. Windows: Single hung windows of various sizes, six-over-six, twelve-over-twelve; no shutters; projecting wood plank window frames, mortise and tenon joints with dowel fasteners; heads of window trimmed to match cornice molding.
8. Roof: Gable roof parallel to street, asphalt shingles,

boxed-wood cornice with wood gutter, metal downspouts,
gable roof on ell and appendages.

C. Description of the Interior:

1. Floor plans (first floor only included in survey): The entry and stairhall is entered from the front stoop with a parlor (now bedroom) at southwest corner, closet and buttry (now one space) to the southeast and accessible from the hall and from the old kitchen (now sitting room) behind the entry; hall between "borning room" (bedroom) at northwest corner and the old kitchen, bathroom off borning room and paint locker accessible from the exterior (new construction); new bathroom projects westward from hall between parlor and borning room; rear stairway from old kitchen to second floor spaces; ell used as commercial dining space with kitchen and owner's quarters in appendages at northeast corner of site. Second floor and cellar inaccessible at time of survey.
2. Stairways: Stairways include front staircase in entry hall to second floor, stairway off old kitchen to second floor and garrett, new exterior stairway to second floor; front staircase is L-shaped with landing, rectangular balusters; tapered cylindrical newel with square base, ivory button set into top of newel, molded handrail, paneled wainscot, scroll saw pattern on stringer; rear stairway is L-shape with winders.
3. Flooring: Wide pine boards of various widths, natural finish, cut nails.
4. Doorways and doors: Simple trim, four-pane lights in overdoors; two and four-panel doors.
5. Decorative features and trim: Typical Nantucket house noted for its simplicity with decoration limited to an articulation of its structural system and utilitarian trim; paneled wainscot, wood strips with beaded edges set into walls between window and/or door heads; two semicircular closets with Dutch door, one beneath front staircase off old kitchen and in hall between parlor and old kitchen.
6. Notable hardware: Brass and wrought iron thumb latches, wrought iron strap hinges with heart-shaped finials, H-hinges.

7. Lighting: Electric

8. Heating: Fireplaces in principal rooms, wood trim of bolection molding at surrounds is typical, brick and 9" by 9" ceramic pavers are hearth materials; plaster and flooring changes indicate removal of ovens adjacent to old kitchen fireplace; modern oil-fired hotwater system.

D. Site and Surroundings:

"India House" faces south on India Street, a macadam paved street edged with granite curbs and macadam sidewalk; large lawn with hedges at the southwest, drying and service yards at southwest and northwest partly screened by wood lattice panels and wood board fences.

Prepared by F. Blair Reeves, A.I.A.
Nantucket, Massachusetts
June, 1970

PART III. PROJECT INFORMATION

These records were prepared as part of the India Street Neighborhood Study (MASS-1013) made in the summer of 1970 by the Historic American Buildings Survey on Nantucket, Massachusetts. This is the fifth summer project of a continuing HABS comprehensive survey of the early architecture and urban design of Nantucket financed by a grant from the Nantucket Historical Trust.

The project was under the general supervision of James C. Massey, Chief of the Historic American Buildings Survey. Project Director was Professor F. Blair Reeves, A.I.A., of the University of Florida. Historical information was provided by Mrs. Marie M. Coffin of Nantucket, Massachusetts. Photographs are by Jack E. Boucher of Linwood, New Jersey. The material was edited for deposit in the Library of Congress by Mrs. Constance Werner Ramirez, August, 1971.